

Senator G. Hart (D-Colo.) Interviews
E. H. Knoche
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HART: Good morning. Most of us have never had the pleasure of meeting a real live CIA agent and I don't really have one with me here this morning, but I do have one of the highest ranking officials of the Central Intelligence Agency as my guest. I am pleased to reintroduce him to Colorado. He attended the University of Colorado, his wife is a native of Craig, Colorado and he still has two sons living in the state. My guest this morning is Mr. Henry Knoche, the recently confirmed and appointed Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Over the past year and a half since I've been in office, I've done my best to look into the areas of intelligence and what role they play in our national foreign policy and national security, both in a capacity as a member of the so-called Church Committee and as a member of the new permanent Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. This is an area that very few Americans know much about but we all read novels, we watch television programs, and form a lot of impressions about what the Central Intelligence Agency is and many of those impressions I have found to be inaccurate or incorrect. Therefore, I am very pleased to welcome Mr. Henry Knoche as my

guest this morning for a few minutes to discuss the Central Intelligence Agency. What intelligence is and what role it plays in our country. Good morning Mr. Knoche, it's a pleasure to have you with us. First of all, why do we need intelligence?

KNOCHE: Well, Senator Hart, the need for intelligence is an essential one, simply because those charged in our government with developing foreign policy wisely, effectively, need the best possible judgments and assessments as to what the nature of the world abroad is like. Not only what the current situation is, who's leading it; where are the military weapons; where are the dangers but equally important, what's it going to look like 6 months from now; two years from now; five years from now. And if we can do that job well, serve our foreign policymakers, the Secretary of State, the President, the National Security Council, with that kind of judgment, with that kind of assessment, they can make foreign policies which have a chance of keeping peace and insuring the security of this country that we all love so much.

HART: I think that's a good sort of introduction to intelligence but could you define a little more clearly what intelligence is, what does it include? As I said we all read the novels and all watch television programs and it's very romantic and dramatic but in my very brief and sort of outsider view, I've been surprised at how much of it is not cloak

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and dagger, how much of it is really basic information.

KNOCHE: Well, you're absolutely right Senator, the image of intelligence as imparted to us by Hollywood by the novels. James Bond being perhaps the best living example. James Bond is something I might want very much to be like but in fact, in 23 years in the Agency I never had the opportunities that James Bond ran across. Basically the process of intelligence is a very scholarly, almost university like kind of calling. We have, what I think, is the best library of basic information available anywhere in government on foreign situations, people, geography, history, biographies, you name it. It is basic material of the type that one would find in an encyclopedia or in the tomes of the Library of Congress aided and abetted by all the secret information that we can acquire about foreign situations and prospects. When an analyst goes to size up a foreign situation and provide it to the White House or to the Secretary of State, he has all that information available to him but he must go through it and discard some theses that don't make too much sense, settle on one that does and then present it in an understandable kind of way. So it's a search kind of effort with a premium on the ability to distill, condense and make intelligible his findings about that situation.

HART: So, in other words, it may be as important to the Secretary of State or the President of the United States

to know what the Russian wheat crop looks like for next year as how they're doing with their new submarine or something like that?

KNOCHE: Absolutely, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years ago the pre-occupations were all military, how many divisions were in the field; how many tanks; how many missiles; how many bombers. We can count those now, technology has brought us ways and means of insuring that we know about the military situation abroad, as a matter of fact, it is our ability to know those facts that underlies something like the Strategic Arms Limitation agreement, which can be described as a peacekeeping agreement. So that intelligence supports that kind of an effort, it's not always a provocative kind of effort, it underwrites peacekeeping efforts these days.

HART: It includes things like agricultural development, water supplies, transportation systems, even state of, I would imagine, of education in certain countries is important to know.

KNOCHE: When we, for example, try to assess the kind of leadership that might exist in the Soviet Union or Communist China, how does Brezhnev and his Politburo for example go about his day-to-day work and what are his decisions apt to be over the next 6 months to a year. Well, impacting on him and his colleagues in Moscow are the state of his agriculture, the state of his missiles, the state of his internal politics, whose for him and

whose against him, and if you really want to assess Brezhnev and his leadership you have to look at all these things and the aggregate.

HART: All the pressures that are being brought to bear on him and how he's doing in his own country in effect?

KNOCHE: Yes.

HART: And not just the Soviet Union but almost all countries on earth.

KNOCHE: Precisely.

HART: It is a tremendous undertaking and I think a tremendous responsibility. We are familiar with the old CIA which was very concealed, very secretive. Your presence here today, I think, indicates what I would call perhaps the new CIA and I would like to, since you are a veteran of, I think, 22 or 23 years of the Agency and the entire intelligence community, I would be interested in observations you might have as to first of all, a Deputy Director, the number two man in the Agency really with responsibility of running that Agency on a day-to-day basis now appearing on television, albeit not network television but for the people of Colorado explaining what you do and why you do that. You talked about the changes that have occurred in the last few years in your job.

KNOCHE: Yes, Senator, I think as you point out, a year ago, secrecy and silence were the watch words of any of us in intelligence business and I wouldn't have been

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here on a television show like this today. I'd be willing and would have gladly sat down with you in your office but to sit down openly like this and discuss these things was something we simply did not do. But I think the new watch word that goes with intelligence these days is accountability. We spend a lot of the taxpayers money to do the things that are necessary in the interest of the United States. We are getting greater degrees of examination in oversight from the committees of the Congress and you yourself sit on the new Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, to provide focused, senatorial oversight over the Agency. As we try to insure that the Congress has what it needs to do the job of proper oversight of an outfit like ours, it has also become very clear to us that we need to develop widespread public understanding of what intelligence is and what it isn't. I think we can do that and should do that without imparting secrets. And if you don't mind, let me say something about secrecy. The openness that now goes with intelligence as I've just described, doesn't mean that we're going to reveal secrets which will destroy our effectiveness. The law, written in 1947, which established the CIA at the same time the Defense Department was established, charged the Director of Central Intelligence with protecting intelligence sources and methods for a very good and sufficient reason. If we divulge inadvertently

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or consciously our intelligence sources and methods, our potential adversaries can then take steps to dry up our sources and prevent us from getting what we need to judge these foreign situations. We're not interested in secrets, Senator simply to keep the American public in the dark, or to cloak abuses that we might have been guilty of. I don't condone abuses, George Bush, the Director does not condone abuses, the Senate won't permit it, the House won't permit it, and certainly the Presidency won't permit it. So secrecy does not rhyme with abuses, it rhymes with protecting sources and methods and yet, I think, the wisdom that comes out of a place like CIA describing foreign situations can be made a wider...made available on a wider basis to the American people and American institutions.

HART: I'm very interested in hearing you say that and I think your presence here this morning directs itself toward that goal. I get a number of letters, having been on, as I mentioned before, the temporary oversight committee and now on the permanent. Those are divided about equally, half of those letters say you're helping with the cover-up, you're not asking tough enough questions, you're not really getting underneath what is really there. The other half says Congress has no business in this area you ought to butt out in effect and leave these Agencies alone. I'd be interested in your comment on the second question really because I

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think I can account for the first, because I think we're getting a tremendous degree of cooperation on budget accountability and so on, but what about congressional oversight, do you think it's possible for committees of Congress, such as the one on which I serve, to act responsibly and not interfere with your job and yet do our job of accountability to the American taxpayer?

KNOCHE: Yes, I do, Senator, mainly because what you're talking about goes to the checks and balance system which is part of the system on which our country operates and has operated for 200 years so well. I'd like to keep that going another 100 years if I can and look forward to the tricentennial and I believe there can be responsible congressional oversight just as there must be responsible intelligence community accountability I also believe that the way of the future is going to have a much more constructive relationship between the Executive and the Congress. Congress does have a role to play in foreign policy. The Executive has the basic authority but Congress should be advisory and play a role in that. And the judgments that come out of the intelligence world can serve both branches of our government at the same time. And one further thought, the better the oversight in Congress, the better the oversight I will arrange internally in the CIA to make sure that we stay within the bounds of the law and propriety in doing what is

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necessary to be done. It's not a perfect world, if it were a perfect world there wouldn't be a CIA. And we do have to undertake seamy kinds of business abroad in order to collect the kind of information that this government requires. But I think there is a balance to be struck and I think Congress has a vital role to play in striking that balance.

HART: We've talked about technology and I think even alluded to the fact of electronic means of collecting information which seem to be expanding all the time. You're as familiar as I am with the American feeling of privacy in our constitutional rights and so on, what thoughts briefly might you have about our ability to collect information electronically and not at the same time jeopardize the Americans constitutional rights to privacy.

KNOCHE: Well, I think first of all what's basic in this whole business is appointing people with integrity and wisdom and a degree of statesmanship in trying to make judgments about this field. Technology must be understood. And those like the Attorney General, the Director of Central Intelligence, and I, in my own position, must understand technology in order to control it. That's the first thing that is required.

HART: Well, I appreciate that and I greatly appreciate your presence here this morning and I wish we had another 15 minutes or so to talk. My guest has been Mr. Henry

Knoche, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence Agency and a person very familiar with the state of Colorado. Thank you very much Mr. Knoche, it was a pleasure to have you with us this morning.

KNOCHE: My privilege.